

Remarks

Applicant has added claim 54 to better define Applicants' invention structurally and in view of the prior art cited by the Examiner. It is believed that the amended claims distinguish the invention from the prior art in that they now clearly claim a novel and non-obvious transporter

The principal reference cited by the examiner (Ferne, et al) is directed to a base for a powered wheelchair which includes driven wheels continually biased into contact with the surface upon which the base is positioned. The structure of Ferne is adapted to cause the driving wheels to continually be in contact with the support surface and support the weight of the overall load upon the base, relieving the load on the surrounding rotatable wheels. By way of distinction, Applicant's transporter is selectively operated with the entire frame/base supported by the casters (corner wheels) with the driving wheels disengaged from the support surface. This is a desirable condition in order for the transporter to function in the embodiment as a walker. The transporter is simply convertible to a powered-driven condition by loading it, as by adding the optional seat configuration, and/or the similarly optional load platform. The adding of weight to the frame overcomes the spring bias causing the transporter to operate freely as a walker to become the selectively driven wheelchair. There is nothing disclosed in the art cited by the Examiner which suggests the advantage or construction propounded by Applicant for a variable/optional construct of a wheelchair, walker, transporter with integrated powered operation by the mere adding of the load.

The present invention is directed to a transporter that includes a multi-function for the handicapped. The user may use the transporter as a simple walker by gripping the handle or adjoining arms and maneuver comfortably about. Should the individual desire to utilize the transporter as a wheelchair or powered vehicle, the simple addition of a seat or a loading platform may be accomplished. The weight of the individual or the load added to the transporter causes the drive wheels into contact with the support surface (e.g. sidewalk) enabling the transporter to move about powered by the electrical motors and batteries. The use of bi-directional drives in the motors enables steering by differing rotational speed of the respective wheels, or by reducing the rotation to

a stop for breaking. The drive wheels are preferably non rotatable unless under power by the control to provide positive breaking function.

None of the references cited or relied upon by the Examiner provides the combination of structure and function of Applicant.

Applicant now believes the Application to be in condition for an allowance and such is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would advance the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call the undersigned at 901-537-1108.

Respectfully submitted,

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